

SOUTH CARROLL HIGH SCHOOL

Instrumental Music Program

Handbook

2011 - 2012



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Forward

Instrumental music aims to develop good habits, which will prove invaluable later in life, such as concentration, teamwork, memory skills, and self-discipline. Many of the guidelines outlined in this handbook are constructed specifically to promote the development of these positive attributes.

I am often asked “WHY BAND/ORCHESTRA?” “What does band/orchestra offer that my child cannot learn from other activities and sports?” Although instrumental music shares many similarities with our athletic counterparts, in that teamwork and self-discipline are stressed, instrumental music is much different from other activities or sports. In instrumental music, a definite academic body of knowledge is being learned. In instrumental music, no one is an alternate or plays 'second string'. Everyone in the band/orchestra plays a starting (and crucial) role. Band/orchestra seeks to strengthen small-muscle coordination, while sports concentrate on large-muscle skills. Band/orchestra also provides a means of ‘knowing’ reality and understanding the world in which we live through a unique and moving, yet virtually universal language, which so eloquently conveys things that no other language can even begin to describe. In a nutshell, instrumental music is one of the very best activities in which a child (or adult!) can participate.

If you have any questions regarding this handbook, calendar or any facet of the South Carroll High School instrumental music program, please feel free to contact me at 410-751-3575 or at JRSteve@carrollk12.org.

Thank you for your continued support of the educational programs at South Carroll High School. I’m looking forward to a great year.

Musically Yours,
John R. Stevenson

Philosophy and Function

The primary purpose of the South Carroll High School instrumental music program is to provide students an educational experience in music leading to mastery of the instrumental music content and achievement standards established by the State of Maryland. The program emphasizes those skills and concepts that will provide a foundation for lifelong learning and a way of knowing and understanding the world.

To this end, the primary function of the instrumental music program is to develop students’ skills in:

- **Performing** a varied repertoire of music
- **Reading** and **notating** (writing) music
- **Listening** to, **analyzing**, and **describing** music
- **Evaluating** music and musical performances
- **Understanding** music in relation to history and culture

In addition to the musical training that students receive by performing in ensembles, students learn cooperation and teamwork, commitment, tolerance, and acceptance. Performing well with a group that plays well helps build self-esteem, confidence, and pride in accomplishment. Music study also reinforces reading and math skills, and enhances gross and fine motor coordination.

Performances are presented as a part of the balanced, comprehensive educational program.

Performing Ensembles and Membership Policy

South Carroll High School has three large curricular performing ensembles, Band, Orchestra, and Jazz Ensemble (Stage Band). These large ensembles are open to all qualifying students attending South Carroll High School who play a wind, percussion, or string instrument. These ensembles rehearse during school hours and present several performances throughout the school year.

Additionally, many extracurricular performing opportunities are available to students. Participation will require a commitment of time before or after school. Eligible students who are interested in these opportunities will receive detailed information at a later date. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these performance opportunities. Extracurricular options include, but are not limited to:

- **Solo and Ensemble Festival:** All South Carroll High School Band/Orchestra members are strongly encouraged to participate in the Carroll County Solo and Ensemble Festival. Solo and small ensemble playing is vital to the development of confidence and musical maturity. Students who participate will receive written performance comments and helpful advice from expert performers and educators.
- **All-County Band and Orchestra:** Membership in the Carroll County High School All-County Band and Orchestra is determined by a countywide audition. In order to audition for these ensembles, students must have an “A” in Band/Orchestra and be nominated by their school director. These all-county ensembles are an excellent opportunity for students to perform challenging music and to meet new friends from other schools with similar interests.
- **All-State Band and Orchestra:** The Maryland Band Directors Association (MBDA) and Maryland Orchestra Directors Association (MODA) sponsor an All-State Band and All-State Orchestra, respectively. Membership in these ensembles is very selective and is determined by a statewide audition. In order to audition for these ensembles, students must have an “A” in Band/Orchestra and be nominated by their school director.
- **Pep Band:** All South Carroll High School Band members are strongly encouraged to participate in the SCH Cavalier Pep Band. The Pep Band plays a variety of pop and rock music for home varsity football games, home varsity basketball games and other school-related events. Pep Band is an excellent opportunity for students to increase their performance skills, socialize with other band students and contribute to school spirit.

Instrument Storage And Identification

Every student is responsible for his/her instrument while at school. Students are to handle and play only their own instruments. All students must have their names clearly affixed to the outside of their cases. With the large number of cases in the storage area, and so many cases that are identical, clear identification is very important to prevent one student from taking another student’s instrument home by mistake. *Although all reasonable safety measures will be taken, the school and board of education cannot assume liability for musical instruments while they are in the building.*

It is recommended that parents provide insurance coverage for their child’s instrument(s) through their private homeowners/renters insurance company. The make and serial number of each student’s instrument will also be registered with the school at the beginning of the year.

Grading

Letter grades for band, orchestra, and jazz ensemble will be earned, based on an average of the following factors:

- Written assessments of student learning, homework, and/or independent study assignments
- Performance-based assessments of student learning
- Rehearsal preparation, conduct and participation
 - Students are expected to come to all rehearsals with instrument, music, pencil, and school agenda book. This is essential for success!! Parents will be asked to assist those students to continually fail to bring needed materials to class.
- Performance conduct and participation

Students will be given a syllabus with specific assignments and expectations. Parents of students who are experiencing difficulty will be contacted at mid-marking period time. However, due to the large number of performances and assignments due at the end of each marking period, it is not always possible to estimate final marking period grades at mid-marking period time. It is the student's responsibility to complete and hand-in assignments in a timely manner. Parents should periodically ask their child about the progress he/she is making in fulfilling the goals of the course.

Quality home practice directly affects individual, as well as group learning. Students are expected to take their instruments home at the end of the school day and practice assigned homework material in preparation for the next class meeting.

Home Practice And Private Lessons

Students will have regular homework practice assignments. It is recommended that each student practice a minimum of 120 minutes per week, which averages to less than 20 minutes a day. The practice sessions should be spread out over the week, as practicing 120 minutes in one evening will cause undue mental and physical strain. Students who practice for longer periods or who take private lessons will achieve at a higher level.

All students are also encouraged to take private lessons. Taking private lessons is very common at the middle and high school levels and is a great way of encouraging your child to excel. A good private teacher will challenge your child to be the very best musician he or she can be, and, at the same time, provide individual support when your child needs it most. Remember, private instruction is not a requirement, but we encourage interested students to try it as a supplement to their class work. A list of local private teachers can be provided upon request.

School Owned Instruments

Some larger, more expensive instruments may be loaned from the school. They are not always in the best condition, but are playable. Students are responsible for the routine care and maintenance of loaned school instruments. Repair costs incurred by student negligence will be the responsibility of the student. *Please understand that inventory is limited and available on a first-come basis.*

Instrument Care and Maintenance

Every student who participates in the band or orchestra at South Carroll High School must have a musical instrument and case. Students will be expected to provide smaller, less expensive instruments, although the school does have some of these instruments that can be loaned to students when their own instrument is being repaired.

It is very frustrating for students to attempt to play a poorly maintained instrument. Therefore all students, including those using a school instrument, are responsible for providing some basic accessories to help keep their instruments in good playing condition. Students will be given handouts and instruction regarding the use of these items for the care and maintenance of their instruments throughout the school year. Regular care and maintenance will *greatly* reduce the frequency and cost of repairs – these items quickly pay for themselves! All required and recommended items listed in the ‘Instruments and Accessories’ section below can be purchased from any music store or from Mr. Stevenson (at cost).

Although the list may initially look quite daunting, students probably already own most or all of the items – those that must be purchased are relatively inexpensive, last a long time, and will be put to good use.

‘Step-up’ Instruments

High school instrumentalists should seriously consider purchasing an intermediate or professional quality instrument. Upgrading to a better instrument is quite common, as beginner-quality instruments have some definite limitations. Here are just a few reasons to consider upgrading:

- Higher quality materials, design and manufacturing standards improve instrument response, tone, and intonation (playing in tune)
- Advanced features, such as additional keys/mechanisms facilitate the performance of more challenging music
- Improved performance on a higher quality instrument provides positive feedback and builds student self-confidence
- Students often take more pride in their new, higher quality instrument and are more responsible with them
- The entire ensemble will sound better

Upgrading is a significant monetary investment in your child’s future music education and must be considered carefully before making any decisions.

Even if you choose not to invest in an intermediate or professional instrument, better quality accessories, such as mouthpieces, ligatures, bows, and reeds will facilitate your child’s musical achievement and enhance their musical experience. If you are thinking about upgrading your child’s instrument and/or accessories, please consult Mr. Stevenson for input to help you choose the right equipment for your child’s present and future needs. General recommendations are listed in the ‘Instruments and Accessories’ section.

Instruments and Accessories

This section lists general instrument recommendations, required accessories, recommended accessories and required reeds/mouthpieces mentioned in other sections of this handbook. In addition to the items listed, it is also highly recommended that students have a folding wire music stand for home practice.

- **VIOLIN/VIOLA**

Recommended brands: Glaesel, Knilling, Scherl & Roth *(Please remember that students are growing. Students who currently play 1/2 or 3/4 size instruments may need to exchange them for larger ones in order to insure steady progress. Playing on an instrument of the incorrect size can impede technical progress and may cause physical injury.)*

Required accessories: rosin, shoulder rest, chin rest, soft cloth for cleaning

Recommended accessories: electric tuner or pitch pipe *(for tuning at home)*

- **'CELLO/BASS**

Recommended brands: Glaesel, Knilling, Scherl & Roth, Engelhardt, Virtuoso *(Please remember that students are growing. Students who currently play 1/2 or 3/4 size instruments may need to exchange them for larger ones in order to insure steady progress. Playing on an instrument of the incorrect size can impede technical progress and may cause physical injury.)*

Required accessories: rosin, rock stop, and soft cloth for cleaning

Recommended accessories: electric tuner or pitch pipe *(for tuning at home)*

- **FLUTE**

Recommended brands: Yamaha FYL381H, Gemeinhardt 3SHB

Required accessories: cleaning rod and soft cloth

Recommended accessories: pad savers, polishing cloth

- **OBOE**

Recommended brands: Buffet BC4012-2-0, Yamaha YOB411, and various models by Fox or Renard

Required reeds: Marlin Leshner Medium, handmade reeds *(no plastic/fiber reeds!)*

Required accessories: cork grease, silk swab (or feather), and reed case

Recommended accessories: thumb cushion, polishing cloth

- **BASSOON**

Recommended brands: various models by Fox or Renard

Required reeds: Marlin Leshner Medium, Jones Medium, handmade reeds *(no plastic/fiber reeds!)*

Required accessories: seat strap, crutch, swab, cork grease (or paraffin)

- **CLARINET**

Recommended brands: Buffet E11 or E12, Selmer CL211 or B15P2, Yamaha YCL450N

Required reeds: Mitchell Lurie 3 or 3^{1/2}, Vandoren 2^{1/2} or 3, Vandoren V12 3^{1/2} or 4 if using a Vandoren M15 mouthpiece. *(Students must keep at least two good reeds in their cases at all times. Please only purchase the brand and strength of reeds recommended by the director or private teacher.)*

Required accessories: reed guard (holds and protects 2 or 4 reeds, depending upon model), swab, cork grease, and mouthpiece cap

Recommended accessories: Rovner Dark ligature, mouthpiece cushion, thumb cushion, mouthpiece brush, pad savers

Recommended mouthpieces: Hite Premier (intermediate) or Vandoren M15 (advanced)

- **BASS CLARINET**

Recommended brands: Vito 7166, Yamaha YCL221, Selmer 1430P

Required reeds: Rico Royale or Vandoren 2^{1/2} or 3 (*Students must keep at least two good reeds in their cases at all times. Please only purchase the brand and strength of reeds recommended by the director or private teacher.*)

Required accessories: reed guard (holds and protects 2 or 4 reeds, depending upon model), swab, cork grease, and mouthpiece cap

Recommended accessories: Rovner Dark ligature, mouthpiece cushion, thumb cushion, mouthpiece brush, pad savers

Recommended mouthpieces: Selmer C*

- **SAXOPHONES**

Recommended alto brands: Yamaha YAS52, Selmer AS210

Recommended tenor brands: Yamaha YTS52, Selmer TS200

Recommended baritone brands: Yamaha YBS52, Selmer 1256

Required reeds: La Voz Medium, Hemke 2^{1/2} or 3 (*Students must keep at least two good reeds in their cases at all times. Please only purchase the brand and strength of reeds recommended by the director or private teacher.*)

Required accessories: neck strap, reed guard (holds and protects 2 or 4 reeds, depending upon model), swab, cork grease, and mouthpiece cap

Recommended accessories: Rovner Dark ligature, mouthpiece cushion, mouthpiece brush, pad/neck savers

Recommended mouthpieces: Selmer C*, Yamaha 4C (alto & tenor), Yamaha 5C (baritone)

- **TRUMPET**

Recommended brands: Yamaha YTR4335GS, Bach TR2000, various Bach Stradivarius models

Required mouthpiece: Bach 7C, 5C, or 3C or equivalent (*Please consult director or private teacher for recommendation*)

Required accessories: valve oil (*Al Cass is recommended*), mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, and slide grease

Recommended accessories: polishing cloth, valve cleaning rod, straight mute

- **HORN**

Recommended brands: Holton H378, H379, or H177 double horns

Required mouthpiece: Bach 11 or 7 or equivalent (*Please consult director or private teacher for recommendation*)

Required accessories: rotor oil, mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, and slide grease

Recommended accessories: polishing cloth

- **TROMBONE**

Recommended brands: Yamaha YSL446G or YSL448G, Bach Stradivarius 36 or 42

Required mouthpiece: Bach 6^{1/2}AL or equivalent

Required accessories: Trombotine slide crème and small water spray bottle (*for main slide*), mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, slide grease, rotary valve oil (*for those with F attachment trombones*)

Recommended accessories: polishing cloth, straight mute

- **EUPHONIUM**

Recommended brands: Yamaha YEP321 or Bach 1110

Required mouthpiece: Bach 6^{1/2}AL or equivalent

Required accessories: valve oil (*Al Cass is recommended*), mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, and slide grease

Recommended accessories: polishing cloth, valve cleaning rod

- **TUBA**
 - Recommended brands:** Yamaha YBB321
 - Required mouthpiece:** Bach 22 or 18 or equivalent (*Please consult director or private teacher for recommendation*)
 - Required accessories:** valve oil (*Al Cass is recommended*), mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, and slide grease
 - Recommended accessories:** polishing cloth, valve cleaning rod
- **PERCUSSION**
 - Recommended brands:** Ludwig, Pearl, or Yamaha drum pad (or snare drum) and a small bell set, such as Yamaha YSPK250, Ludwig LUM651, or Ludwig LULE2482R (*Students must own a practice pad, or snare drum, and bell set for home practice*)
 - Required accessories:** All Percussionists are expected to perform on mallet instruments as well as snare and auxiliary percussion. All percussionists must have a pair of snare drum sticks, a pair of keyboard mallets, and a stick bag for all classes. It is recommended that percussionists use 5A or 7BA snare drum sticks, and Musser M14 (or equivalent) keyboard mallets. Each stick and mallet should be marked with the student's initials. For safety reasons, drum sticks and mallets may not be carried around the school building unless they are secured in a stick bag. The bag will also reduce the number of "lost" sticks.
 - Recommended accessories:** Xylophone mallets, Timpani mallets, Snare drum 'brushes'

Rehearsal Expectations

As lifelong success depends in part on learning to make responsible choices, the South Carroll High School instrumental music program uses a self-discipline plan that guides students to make good decisions about their behavior, and thus an opportunity to learn in a positive, nurturing classroom environment.

Students are expected to come to all rehearsals with an open mind and cooperative spirit. In order to ensure productive, positive classes, students must:

- Be on time (*to be early is to be on time – to be on time is to be late*)
- Have their 'stuff'
- Be respectful of property and each other
- Have an attitude to learn

To encourage students to meet these classroom expectations, appropriate behavior will be recognized with praise and positive notes or phone calls home. However, when self-discipline problems arise the following steps will be taken to help students learn to solve problems:

- **First time student falls short of the expectations:** Warning
- **Second time:** Time away from the class and conference with the student to develop a plan for solving the problem
- **Third time:** Consequence(s) appropriate to the behavior(s) or action(s) in question and contact parent
- **Fourth time:** Referral to counselor and/or administrator
- **Severe incident:** Refer directly to administrator

Performance Dress

Performances are formal occasions. Therefore, the South Carroll High School instrumental music department has adopted the following dress code:

- Black trousers/slacks and black shirt for men. Trousers must be traditional length and style (no jeans)
- Black skirt and shirt/blouse or black dress for ladies. Skirts/dresses must extend to ankle (floor length 'A' line)
- Solid black shoes (no sneakers/tennis shoes please)
- Black socks for all men and black or skin-tone hose for ladies

This dress code will be enforced for all public band/orchestra performances. Students who are not appropriately dressed will not be allowed to perform. Questions regarding the dress code should be handled well in advance of the performance.

If this dress code presents a hardship, please contact Mr. Stevenson at your earliest convenience. We gladly accept donations of outgrown or no-longer-needed items from the above list for emergency use.

Performance And After School Rehearsal Attendance

All band and orchestra members are expected to attend all scheduled performances and rehearsals. Every student plays a unique and important role in the success of the ensemble. A calendar of events is attached to this handbook and is available on the SCH website. Additionally, reminder letters and/or e-mails will be sent home 2 – 3 weeks before scheduled events with specific information.

Absences may be honored if the following procedure is followed:

1. A note is received from the student's parent or guardian at least one week before a performance and one day before a rehearsal, except in the case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency, please contact the director at your earliest convenience.
2. The director will review the note and indicate whether or not the absence will be excused. If the absence is excused, the student will receive an alternative assignment to replace the concert grade.

Excuses that will not lower your child's performance grade if given in advance of the performance include:

1. Sickness or medical condition that prevents your child from performing, as per doctor's order.
2. Death in the immediate family.
3. Religious observance.
4. Attendance at family wedding, college graduation, or similar event whose scheduling is not controlled by the family.
5. Other special circumstances approved by Mr. Stevenson and Mr King.

Non-school related sports events will not be excused.

If you think that there may be a conflict with a scheduled concert or rehearsal, please contact Mr. Stevenson at your earliest convenience so that the matter can be resolved in the best interests of your child and the ensemble. Students who fail to attend a rehearsal or performance responsibility without an approved note from a parent or guardian will have their final marking period grade lowered.

There are many students involved in the performing ensembles at South Carroll High School. If transportation to a performance is a problem, please let the director know as soon as possible so that alternate transportation arrangements can be made.

Finally, it is expected that all students remain for the entire performance, both for educational reasons and out of courtesy to the other students who have worked so hard on their portion of the program.

Service-Learning Opportunities

Students who participate in instrumental music ensembles are eligible for five (5) service-learning hours per course, per academic year. This is based on students performing in at least two evening concerts, district band festival, and graduation. These performances are open to the public and required as a part of the class, and necessitate approximately 125 hours of rehearsal during the school day.